

Smoke on the Water

Calvin Campbell

The square dance singing call “**Smoke On The Water**” was composed to a popular WWII song written in 1944. Poncho Baird recorded the SD version on Western Jubilee Records. This version can be purchased from the Lloyd Shaw Foundation. [Click here](#) for the music. [Click here](#) to hear Poncho singing his version. [Click here](#) for the cue sheet on Cedernet.

Poncho’s “**Smoke on the Water**” is a standard singing call at traditional square dances. It’s great music and the OBC words have been sung by hundreds of callers and thousands of dancers. I learned this singing call in the 1960’s and I can still remember the OBC today. I have included the URLs for two YouTube clips. [Click Here](#) for #1. [Click here](#) for #2. On (#1) watch the lips of the dancers. They are singing the words.

I think Poncho’s version is a great singing call for Community Dances. It’s also an easy song for a band to learn to play.

Cedernet also printed the original words to the song. As I understand it, “Smoke on the Water” referred to the smoke generated by ships and armies to mask movements of ships and troops. In 1944, smoke screens were used extensively in many battles. They are also used in modern warfare.

Red Foley recorded the first version of the song. [Here](#) is a YouTube URL of that version. This song was also recorded by several other artists. Here are some other versions I was able to find on YouTube. [Boyd Heath](#), [Westley Tuttle](#).

Poncho and Marie lived in Santa Fe, NM. Judy and I lived in Santa Fe from 1964 through 1969. We had a square dance club in Santa Fe and we visited often with Poncho and Marie Baird. I cut my first recorded singing call in Poncho’s home studio.

Both these artists were very talented singers and if you can find their records they are worth hearing. They specialized in songs of the southwest.